

generous and considerate human beings. I will sorely miss her.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2099,
DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. Y. TIM HUTCHINSON

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 29, 1995

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, as a staunch defender of both veterans and the balanced budget, I want to set the record straight on how veterans are being treated under the GOP's 7-year plan.

Under the conference agreement for VA/ HUD appropriations, VA Medical Care is increased by \$400 million over last year's level. Medical Research is increased by \$5 million over last year's level and the Minor Construction Program is increased by \$37 million over last year's level. Through responsible deficit reduction measures, we seek to preserve the dignity of veterans and the standard of living for future generations.

The VA/ HUD Appropriations Act is very generous to veterans' programs. In fact, the VA/ HUD act reflects cuts in nearly every other agency program or account except VA's Medical Care Account. This increase comes at a time of a declining population and declining utilization of VA hospitals. It might interest you to know that on any given day between 23 percent and 50 percent of all beds in VA hospitals lie vacant. The money used to staff, and heat empty beds could be better used in the actual delivery of services to veterans.

According to GAO, if the VA were to analyze the President's budget using the same assumptions the Department used when it analyzed the budget approved by the Congress, the VA would find that veterans are better off under the congressional budget than under the President's own plan. When the Secretary of Veterans Affairs was asked if veterans would suffer more under the Clinton administration's plan he said, "that's absolutely right."

The Republican plan will preserve and fund VA health care at a level that ensures the quality that veterans have come to expect. But it also tasks the system to become more efficient and deliver care in a more cost-effective manner. VA spends more than \$5,000 per patient per year. This is \$1,800 more than Medicare and a whopping \$3,800 more than the private sector. Looking at these numbers, there must be ways for the VA to become more efficient.

Health care is changing rapidly and VA must be part of that change.

We need to question the need for more buildings and instead look for ways to provide more care. VA has historically been an institutionally based system that now is forced to support an aging network of 173 hospitals, 376 outpatient clinics, 133 nursing homes, and 39 domiciliaries. We need to seriously examine what, where, and if VA needs to build in order to better serve veterans. The approach taken by this conference bill is a step in the right di-

rection by asking the VA to assemble a long-term plan for its infrastructure and construction needs. The VA, must begin to plan strategically like the private sector, taking into consideration such factors as an increasingly constrained budgetary environment, a declining veteran population, shifting demographics, and the rapidly changing health care market. Today, when 9 out of 10 veterans have access to private health insurance, and 10 percent of current VA users are leaving the VA system to use Medicare, we seriously have to question the need for more facilities. The major construction level of \$136 million and the minor construction level of \$190 million reverse the historical trend of anchoring the VA in bricks and mortar. Today's health care is becoming less and less institutional. The VA must be part of that trend. It must have the flexibility to go to the veterans instead of requiring the veteran to travel long distances to procure health care in often aging and obsolete facilities.

I believe that veterans and taxpayers will be better served by a VA that is more efficient and provides more accountability to those who provide the basis of its support. This bill is pro-veteran. It shows that Republicans are committed to putting veterans first.

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SPEECH OF

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 29, 1995

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. President Clinton has announced his intention to veto this bill because it funds veterans programs at \$900 million less than what he requested in his budget.

Right now, nearly 2 million veterans live in Florida, nearly 60,000 in my district alone. More veterans live in Florida than in any other State except one. And 100 veterans move to Florida every day. These men and women are growing older and need medical care.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a slap in the face to Florida's veterans. The President requested \$154 million for the Brevard County Hospital which would serve Florida's veterans in and around my district. But the Republicans in Congress took away that money. That hospital so desperately needed by veterans will not be built.

Where do sick veterans in Florida go for hospital care? For the last few years, hundreds of Florida veterans who have developed psychological problems are shipped out of State. That is right. They get shipped off to Mississippi and Alabama for their care. Two beautiful States, indeed, but far away from their loved ones in Florida. I think this is wrong. To me, there is nothing more compelling than the need to care for veterans who suffer the effects of fighting our wars. That is why Florida needs the Brevard County Hospital.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, with this bill, almost all renovation and construction of veteran's health facilities will terminate. A funding freeze would lead to a sharp reduction in the number of employees who counsel veterans and decide claims for benefits. The VA's award-winning medical and prosthetic research program would be cut in every year under the freeze.

Mr. Speaker, balancing the budget is a top priority. And I am committed to doing just that. The President is also committed to a balanced budget. But in balancing the budget, a shared sacrifice is necessary. And I share the President's view that we must not balance the budget on the backs of our Nation's most fragile citizens—seniors, veterans, poor women, children, and the disabled.

Our Nation's veterans earned their benefits through service and sacrifice. It should be America's highest priority to honor our commitment with our veterans. I believe it is wrong to abandon our veterans who have gone in harm's way to serve our country. We need to take care of our U.S. servicemen and women—when they are fighting our wars, and when, as veterans, they need health care. I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill.

AMOS F. LONGORIA POST OFFICE
BUILDING

HON. FRANK TEJEDA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 1995

Mr. TEJEDA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce to the House that I have introduced legislation today to designate the United States Post Office building located at 7980 FM 327 in Elmhurst, TX as the "Amos F. Longoria Post Office Building."

During the August district work period, the citizens of Elmhurst presented me with a petition requesting that their new postal building, opening in December 1995, be named in honor of Pvt. Amos F. Longoria.

Amos Longoria was born in Elmhurst, TX on September 12, 1924. He was the son of humble parents, Bonaficio and Juanita F. Longoria. He had four sisters and two brothers: Pauline Longoria, Marie Longoria Welch, George Longoria, William Longoria, Tommie Longoria Lynch, and Bonnie Longoria de Leon.

Amos F. Longoria also had many close friends who grew up with him and shared love and caring during his short life. Amos is remembered as a happy person. He had many friends, and was kind and considerate to all. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and many other sporting activities. He enjoyed music, played the guitar and sang. He is said to have had a good sense of humor, liked to laugh and make others laugh.

During his last year of school at Elmhurst, Amos F. Longoria was drafted into the U.S. Army in April of 1943. World War II was raging. Amos, though only 18 years old, was excited to report for basic training at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX. He was then sent to Camp Wheeler in Georgia.

Amos F. Longoria volunteered to serve overseas in the European theater. He had hopes of being near his older brother, George, who was serving in the 36th Infantry Division.

Amos F. Longoria was assigned to the 30th Infantry, 3d Division, and soon saw combat in the Italian campaign. Military history records that some of the hardest and most hazardous fighting in World War II was in the Italian campaign. On a more personal note, my father, Frank M. Tejada, Sr. and his close friend George Longoria, honorably served our country in the Italian campaign and were both seriously wounded in Italy in November of 1943.

Less than 6 months after joining the military, Amos was lightly wounded in combat, but returned to duty shortly thereafter. A few days later, only 2 months into his 19th year of life, on November 13, 1943, Amos was mortally wounded at the famous Crossing of the Rapido River in Italy. Amos F. Longoria died in an army hospital in Italy on November 19, 1943.

A Biblical verse, John 15: 9–13, states, "My commandment is this: Love one another, just as I love you. The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them."

Private Amos F. Longoria is among the many persons who have shown their greatest love for country and friends. He is part of that great tradition of service to country, even to the point of giving up one's life for our country.

I could not think of a more appropriate honor for the town of Elmendorf and for the Longoria family than the designation of the United States Post Office at 7980 FM 327 in Elmendorf, TX as the "Amos F. Longoria Post Office Building." This designation will commemorate the service and sacrifice of Pvt. Amos F. Longoria and will further serve to remind all that the price of freedom can never be taken for granted.

I would like to urge my colleagues to support the noble effort of Elmendorf's citizens to honor one of its native sons. I commend the citizens of Elmendorf for their thoughtfulness on this project, and I look forward to visiting the Amos F. Longoria Post Office many times in the future.

CONNECTICUT HOSPICE HONORED ON 21ST ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 1995

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, December 2, the Connecticut Hospice will celebrate its 21st anniversary with a holiday celebration, "Lumieres de Noel." It is with great pleasure that I rise today to salute this wonderful organization, and to thank all of its supporters for brightening the lives of terminally ill patients and their families.

Twenty-one years ago, the Connecticut Hospice pioneered a new approach for treating terminally ill patients by addressing their emotional and spiritual needs in addition to their physical ones. The individuals who began the Connecticut Hospice understood the need for patients to be cared for in a familiar, comforting environment, surrounded by their loved ones. Their work helped to transform how our society handles terminal illness and brought dignity and comfort to those in the last stages of life.

Under the leadership of the Connecticut Hospice, the hospice movement has brought the science of comfort and the art of caring to

a new level, providing release from pain to ensure quality of life. Families are both recipients and partners in high-touch care, while hospice staff are the givers of high-technology care. Physicians, nurses, social workers, pastors, pharmacists, dieticians, and artists combine their competence with compassion to make life full and meaningful.

The John D. Thompson Hospice Institute for Education, Training, and Research, an affiliate of the Connecticut Hospice, Inc., enables hospice expertise and information to be shared with health care institutions throughout the world. Through the institute, medical students and other health care personnel are educated in all aspects of hospice care. The institute also provides the means to conduct in-depth research, allowing the Connecticut Hospice to benefit from the latest in health care technology and to be able to upgrade constantly the standards of patient care.

As the JDT Institute and the Connecticut Hospice carry their 21 years of experience into the 21st century, they are able to reach the Nation and the world. This year, "hospice.com" was established as a home page on the World Wide Web. Requests for information have been received from all over the United States, from Japan, Malaysia, and countries in Africa, widening the circle of the hospice community.

I congratulate the Connecticut Hospice for inspiring a nation, for what it has done for America, and for what it can do for the world. I urge all communities around the Nation to support hospice care in every way possible.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 1995

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that I am not recorded as having voted on rollcall No. 762, a motion to instruct House conferees on the conference report on H.R. 2099, the VA–HUD–independent agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 1996.

Moments before, I voted to order the previous question. I should have been recorded as voting "yes" on the motion to instruct, because I am opposed to the 17 riders restricting EPA's regulatory power and ability to enforce numerous air and water pollution regulations.

ROMANIAN NATIONAL DAY

HON. FLOYD SPENCE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 1995

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to talk about Romania on the occasion of its National Day on December 1.

As it celebrates its fifth National Day after its defeat of communism, Romania remains committed to joining the West as a modern democratic state.

Romania demonstrated its early desire to join the West by being the first Central European nation to join the Partnership for Peace

[PFP], officially joining the program on January 26, 1994. Since then, Romania has had far more bilateral military exchanges with the United States than any other PFP nation. Likewise, the United States commitment to joint training with Romania's Armed Forces has grown in size and complexity. Romanian troops have participated in NATO exercises in Europe and in the United States, most recently in Fort Polk, LA.

Since emerging from a Communist dictatorship in 1990, Romania has demonstrated in significant ways its commitment to becoming a strong ally of the United States. The Romania–United States military-to-military cooperation program is one of the strongest in central Europe.

In 1990, Romania chaired the United Nations Security Council during the debate over the invasion of Kuwait. In that capacity, Romania helped lead efforts to authorize military intervention and impose economic sanctions against Iraq—despite costing its developing economy billions of dollars. Furthermore, Romania sent a military medical unit to Kuwait as a part of Operation Desert Storm and a medical battalion to Somalia in concert with the United States-led peacekeeping mission there. More recently, Romania has been at the forefront of support to peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia by offering logistical support to NATO forces.

Mr. Speaker, the fall of the Iron Curtain has brought great promise to the people of Central and Eastern Europe while posing great challenges to the governments of these once Communist countries. On the occasion of its National Day, I congratulate Romania for its accomplishments over the short 5 years since its democratization began and I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Romania well as it continues to meet its political, military, and economic challenges.

IN HONOR OF LAMBDA THETA PHI, AN OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATION

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 1995

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lambda Theta Phi, service social fraternity emphasizing Latin unity and the celebration of Latin culture. It will be celebrating its 20th anniversary at a dinner on December 2.

In 1975 at Kean College of New Jersey, 10 students founded the first and only nationally recognized Latino Greek letter fraternity, Lambda Theta Phi. Gus Garcia, a founding member, served as the fraternity's first president. As the first national Latin fraternity, it was created in the image of great Latin thinkers, such as Jose Marti, Simon Bolivar, and El Cid.

In addition to active chapters in New Jersey, Pennsylvania Connecticut, and Florida, the fraternity has chapters at Saint Peter's College and Stevens Institute of Technology in my district.

The fraternity's goals are to promote scholarship, Latin unity, respect for all cultures and brotherhood. Although the fraternity is only 20 years old, it represents 500 years of culture. I am privileged to be an honorary member of the fraternity. Although the fraternity was created at a time when there was disunity among